

AL-11187 C.2 CONNEXUS

A Magazine for Alberta Government Managers

Spring 2000 Edition

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Survey Sez...

APS Job Satisfaction Up

Two more certainties can be added to the list of life. The Oxford dictionary says sez is a word. And the Alberta public service today rates highly as one of the great places to work, with ongoing room for improvement.

Recently the Globe and Mail's Report on Business magazine ranked Edmonton based PCL Contractors Ltd. as one of the 35 best companies to work for in Canada. The firm's own employee survey found 80 per cent were satisfied with their jobs.

Well, guess what? They're not alone. In the most recent survey of government of Alberta employees, 80 per cent reported that they were satisfied in their work. That marks a dramatic 12 per cent increase since 1997—when only 68 per cent expressed satisfaction with their jobs—and a two per cent increase since 1998.

Corporate Project Leader Brian Supervich explains that "the findings serve as a barometer which departments can use to assess their human resource strategy progress. The results this year show employees are

becoming more self-supporting. Job satisfaction and employee self-reliance are up. It's good news."

The 1999-2000 results are based on a telephone survey of 3,585 employees, about 19 per cent of

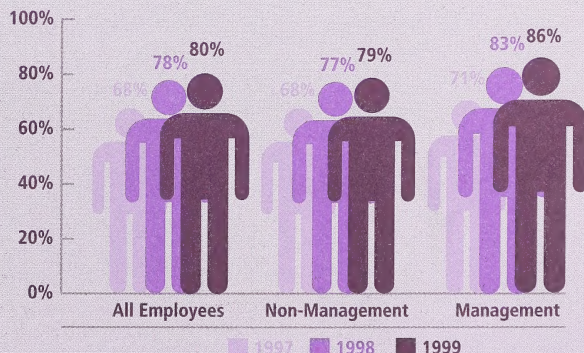
the workforce. The survey was conducted between November and January by Research Innovations Inc., an independent Alberta consulting firm, under the leadership of Supervich and his cross-government project team.

Here are some questions and responses from the polling:

- ☐ You strive to achieve expected outcomes. Ninety-nine per cent agree.
- ☐ You have the skills and knowledge to meet the current requirements of your job. Ninety-seven per cent agree.

Continued on page 2

Percentage of Employees who were Very Satisfied or Somewhat Satisfied in Their Work as a Government of Alberta Employee



CONNEXUS

is published by the Personnel Administration Office. Its purpose is to keep managers in the Alberta public service informed about current policies, goals and programs. It serves to provide managers with information to assist in their individual development and that of the Alberta public service.

The views expressed in **CONNEXUS** are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Personnel Administration Office, nor does publishing them imply endorsement. The editorial policy for this magazine is set out in a document approved by the Public Service Commissioner. A copy can be obtained from the Editor.

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Survey Sez... *continued*

- ☐ You adapt to changes to your job or work environment. Ninety-seven per cent agree.
- ☐ You keep yourself informed about changes to your job or work environment. Ninety-six per cent agree.
- ☐ You actively work to expand your knowledge and skills. Ninety-five per cent agree.
- ☐ You have the skills and knowledge to meet the anticipated requirements of your job over the next three years. Eighty-seven per cent agree.
- ☐ You know and understand how your work contributes to the achievement of your department business plan. Eighty-one per cent agree.
- ☐ You have acquired or developed the knowledge and skills over the past two years which has made you more competitive in the job market. Seventy-eight per cent agree.
- ☐ You know and understand the government of Alberta's goals and priorities. Sixty-nine per cent agree.

When supervisors were asked the same questions on how they viewed the employees they supervise, the results were similar, suggesting comparable opinions exist from both perspectives.

"The numbers say a lot of good things about the public service," concludes Supervich. "Overall, it's an encouraging story."

In terms of their organization's performance, employees generally identified two areas with the greatest room for improvement—asking for input when planning business improvements and recognizing employees for their contribution to progress on business goals.

The latest findings encompass a wide-range of questions and answers. Each department will receive its specific ministry results from Research Innovations Inc.

The employee opinion poll originated in 1996 when the PAO, deputy ministers and human resource directors from across government developed a corporate human resource development strategy.

As part of the strategy, core measures of employee satisfaction were established and annual surveys commissioned to obtain and assess employees' views on those measures. ■



Core Measures Survey Team((left to right) Torri Robbins, Resource Development; Alan Hall, AFRD; Coral Thygesen, president, Research Innovations Inc.; Brian Supervich, project leader, PAO; Brian Free, Environment; and Donna Bagdan, AFRD. Missing from the photo are John Buie, Resource Development and Barbara McEwen, Community Development.

One of four cross-government initiatives for 2000/2001

Aboriginal Policy Framework Points a Path Forward

As a cross-government initiative for 2000/2001, the framework will affect every Alberta government department and agency that deals with Aboriginal people. And now our story begins . . .

A number of Alberta government programs already address the socio-economic circumstances of Aboriginal people in this province such as the Native Education Policy, the Aboriginal Health Strategy, First Nation-delivered social assistance benefits to members living on and off reserve, First Nation-delivered child welfare programs, First Nation police services and Aboriginal involvement in the Child and Family Services Authorities.

Alberta's proposed Aboriginal Policy Framework reflects these and proposes a path to the future, with an emphasis on enhanced well-being, self-reliance, effective consultation on resource and economic development, partnerships and the clarification of roles and responsibilities of federal, provincial and Aboriginal governments and organizations.

Consultation process

The proposed framework responds to a variety of different concerns. Aboriginal communities have been seeking a more coordinated and consistent approach to their interests from government departments; government departments have been seeking more effective ways to engage Aboriginal communities and the province's resource development industry has been seeking greater certainty in its relationships with Aboriginal communities.

In 1998, when the Hon. Dave Hancock became Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, he asked for a policy statement on the relationship between government and Aboriginal people.

To help formulate this, a focus group of Aboriginal, government and industry leaders was held in June 1998. It concluded that a policy framework would help shape the Alberta government vision for government/Aboriginal relations and that the goals, principles and commitments to action of such a framework would lend substance to that vision.

Premier Klein has personally supported the framework's development as a means of improving Alberta's ability to address Aboriginal issues. In July 1999, the proposed framework received Cabinet approval as a draft for public consultation.

In June 1999, Premier Klein appointed the Hon. Pearl Calahasen as Associate Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. An important part of her ministerial responsibilities involved consulting with Albertans on the proposed framework. She and her staff subsequently visited communities all over Alberta, from the Peigan Nation to the town of High Level, at meetings with First Nations, Metis settlements, the Metis Nation of Alberta Association, Friendship Centres, municipalities, industry and Child and Family Services Authorities, among others. There have been a total of 51 meetings, province-wide, and from them have emerged more than 50 written responses to the proposed framework.

The Framework

The framework was released in September 1999. It was presented first in Edmonton to the leadership of First Nations, the Metis settlements, the Metis Nation of Alberta Association and subsequently to industry, other governments and to the public. The framework's draft document was also posted on Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations Web site at

www.inter.gov.ab.ca.

(To view, click on the What's New button and pull down the document entitled *Strengthening Relationships: the Government of Alberta's proposed Aboriginal Policy Framework*.)

The consultation process officially ended on January 31, 1999, but discussions with Aboriginal and other communities continue. Written summaries of meetings have been prepared and shared with those who took part. An overview document, entitled *What You Told Us*, has been circulated to all participants, in an effort to ensure that all views expressed have been captured. Written and recorded verbal information has been compiled for review.

Continued on page 4

Aboriginal Policy Framework *continued*

A living document

This framework sets out some important goals. Achieving them will require coordinated effort from Aboriginal, provincial, federal and municipal governments and organizations, as well as the private and volunteer sectors and individual Albertans.

The framework is not in itself a policy. It represents a continuation and refinement of existing policies, with a potential to develop new, sector-specific policies to meet identified needs, hopefully improving dialogue between all concerned Albertans, Aboriginal communities, resource development industries and all orders of government.

Many other documents define relationships between the Alberta government and specific Aboriginal communities. Among them are the Understanding on First Nations/Alberta Relations, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Grand Council of Treaty 8 and the Government of Alberta, the Alberta protocol with the Peigan Nation, the Metis Settlements Accord and its related legislation, the Alberta/Metis Nation of Alberta Association Framework Agreement, the Athabasca Tribal Council/Industry agreement and legislation on the repatriation of Blackfoot sacred artifacts.

This framework is a living document, designed to evolve to meet changing conditions. It is one more step in the Government of Alberta's continuing relationship with Aboriginal people in this province. The Government of Alberta with First Nations and Metis governments and other Aboriginal organizations must continue to move forward on their existing partnerships and cooperative relationships, and to build new ones.

Many Alberta government departments and agencies are now reviewing their Aboriginal data, strategies and programs to determine how they fit into this framework. Both individually and collectively we will now—in consultation with Aboriginal organizations—develop implementation plans to put this framework into practice.

Importance of reporting to the public

The Government of Alberta will report to the people of Alberta on its progress in meeting the framework's three goals. Those are to help close the Aboriginal socio-economic gap, to manage natural resources for the benefit of all Albertans, and to clarify government roles and responsibilities in dealings with the Aboriginal community.

To achieve these goals, government, industry and Aboriginal communities need to continue working together to build partnerships to enhance employment and business opportunities. There are many examples of successful partnerships throughout Alberta. We can build on these successes by enhancing the readiness of Aboriginal communities

to engage in employment and business partnerships. The goal is sustainable economies and self-reliant people and communities, so that all Albertans can participate in the benefits that flow from the Alberta Advantage, Aboriginal people included. ■

Many Alberta government departments and agencies are now reviewing their Aboriginal data, strategies and programs to determine how they fit into this framework.

Why an Aboriginal Policy Framework?

Facts on Aboriginal people in Alberta*

- By ancestry, the Aboriginal population in Alberta is composed of 117,465 North American Indians, 45,745 Metis and 1,630 Inuit.
- More than 48,000 First Nations people, belonging to 45 First Nations, live on more than 100 reserves in Alberta.
- Some 5,000 Metis live on eight settlements, a 1.25 million acre Metis land base that is unique in Canada.
- Edmonton has Alberta's largest urban Aboriginal population (33,235).
- More than 22,000 Aboriginal people live in Calgary.
- Median individual income, male over 15, non-Aboriginal: \$27,345
- Median individual income, male over 15, Aboriginal: \$15,032
- Median individual income, female over 15, non-Aboriginal: \$14,778
- Median individual income, female over 15, Aboriginal: \$10,021
- Percentage of Aboriginal people in Alberta with a university degree: 4.1
- Percentage of non-Aboriginal degree holders: 13.7
- Percentage of Aboriginal people with trade certificate or diploma: 3.5
- Percentage of non-Aboriginal trade certificate/diploma holders: 3.3
- Percentage of Aboriginal people aged 60 or more: 4.1
- Same age group, non-Aboriginal: 13.3
- Percentage of Aboriginal population under 19 years old: 46.1
- Percentage of same age group, non-Aboriginal: 29.1

**Data sources: Statistics Canada 1996 Census Indian Register; Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development*

Shared Services...

A Behind the Scenes Look at the Building of the ACSC

This is an inside look at how the Alberta government is "building" the Alberta Corporate Service Centre (ACSC) and what steps are being taken to move government's corporate administrative services into its new shared services home.

In October 1999, the Alberta government set the stage to build the ACSC using a shared services approach. Building this corporate service centre is all about changing the way we do business. It's about sharing a common set of services in the areas of finance, human resources, information technology and general administration, while freeing up resources for front-line programs and ultimately the needs of Albertans.

Since October, we've spent considerable time researching and gathering information from ministries and experts to ensure we've got the right information before we start "designing" our home.

Key activities have included the following:

- Holding town hall meetings to share the vision of the shared services initiative and field questions regarding the implementation process.
- Conducting consultation meetings with all government ministries to discuss the implementation of the shared services

initiative and to determine how this cross-government initiative can best meet the needs of each ministry.

- Bringing on CAIL Consulting Group Inc., experts on the subject of designing and implementing shared services, to assist in the detailed design and construction of a "made in Alberta" shared services model.

Now, the ACSC is in the blueprint stage. The information gathered at the consultation meetings has been consolidated into a government-wide inventory of existing support services. Every service not directly involved in program delivery has been considered a support or "transactional" service.

Key design activities underway or being planned include

- sketching out the ACSC organizational structure and identifying core human resources
- confirming services/scope
- laying out a service implementation/transition plan
- establishing an appropriate pricing strategy and
- identifying outsourcing opportunities.

The "official" groundbreaking for shared services is in April 2000. That's when the ACSC will submit its implementation strategy to the deputy ministers' committee, laying out an action plan to achieve the results and targets identified in the government busi-

ness plan for the shared services initiative.

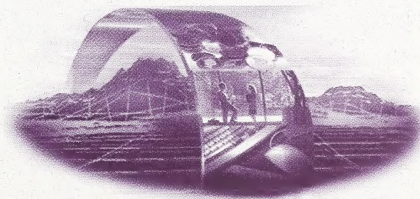
Essentially, this "construction plan" will include an inventory of services being considered for the shared services centre, including estimates of resources and FTEs, and targeted dates for the movement of these services to the ACSC.

Due to the magnitude of this initiative, combined with the complexity of government operations, it will be necessary to transition these services in phases throughout the first year. A key target is to have 80% of these services consolidated by December 2000.

The ACSC is all about capitalizing and building upon the professional skill base we have in our public service, while partnering effectively with local businesses to provide state-of-the-art service delivery mechanisms to support our routine administrative requirements.

It means new employment and business opportunities, new investment in our technology infrastructure, more effective service delivery in regions throughout Alberta, more money into programs for Albertans and the ability to appropriately identify cross-government issues, expectations and priorities. It also creates an effective climate for future change and innovation. ■

Alberta CORPORATE SERVICE CENTRE
INTRANET SHARED SERVICES INITIATIVE



The new ACSC Web site address is
<http://www.gov.ab.ca/internal/acsc/>

Annette Trimbee

Blazing a New Trail at Environment

Annette Trimbee answers questions with a thoughtfulness and precision you suspect made her the natural choice to lead Alberta Environment's new Policy Secretariat, a group designed to tackle the heady world of strategic policy.

The secretariat is about looking at the big picture," she says. "Alberta Environment is a large, complex department with a broad mandate. The secretariat's job is to make sure the department's policy analysis and development are better coordinated and integrated."

A working mother whose 15 years in government have been spent with Alberta Environment as biologist, section head, branch head and—most recently—director of environmental assessment, Trimbee was chosen by Environment's Deputy Minister to get the secretariat up and running, and to lead it.

"We're following a trend in the public service about being more strategic when it comes to policy. Alberta Environment has, by its nature, been more operationally focused over the years. There's a recognition now that we too need to be more strategic."

Where do you begin now as an executive director told to create, staff and develop a new entity?

"First, we had to get executive's 'buy-in' for the secretariat's size and function. Basically it meant one-on-one meetings with the members of executive. We were pretty well received and were given a lot of support.

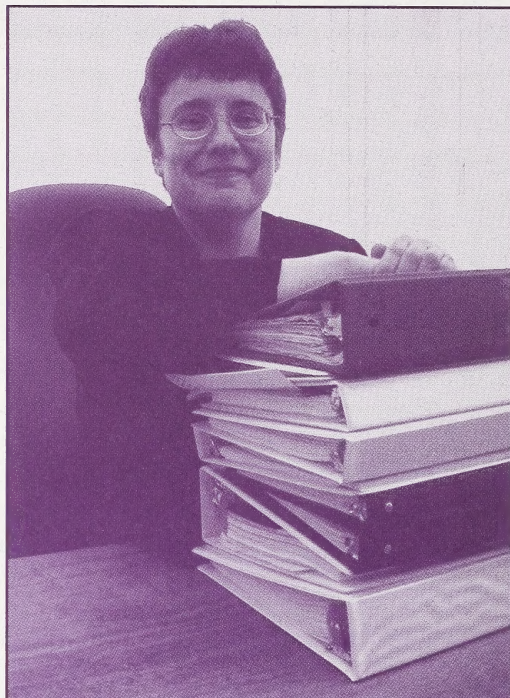
"Next, we sent out a letter inviting people throughout the department to express their interest in becoming involved in the secretariat. We were absolutely overwhelmed with the response. There's a real appetite out there for this kind of work. We found a

lot of interest from people who want to be involved now, or somewhere down the road."

That meant some difficult choices, and an additional burden—there were only 15 to 20 positions available, so it was necessary to keep in touch with many of those who couldn't be accommodated first time around.

"We wanted to create a dynamic, fluid group that people would be continually moving in and out of. That means staying in touch with many people who have expressed an interest.

"We're following a trend in the public service about being more strategic when it comes to policy. Alberta Environment has, by its nature, been more operationally focused over the years. There's a recognition now that we too need to be more strategic."



Annette Trimbee — Director of the Policy Secretariat of Alberta Environment

"We conducted a workshop in January for the secretariat's core team, and for the 'policy affiliates,' staff in other parts of the department who act as our consultants. You have to have those relationships. Policy is about context, and for context, you have to be connected to the operation. We can't make policy in a vacuum. The affiliates are our connection."

Conducted by a consultant, the workshop was a primer for staff, and included current thinking on the subject of policy, the capacity of policy, and the distinction between policy research and policy analysis. It was a necessary foundation for the next step, the development of an operational strategy, a process that is now underway.

"I see part of my job as managing transition," says Trimbee. "Every single person in the secretariat had a job before. My job is to help them let go of their previous duties and keep them focused on what they will be doing.

"The group is dynamic. There will always be people coming and going, so in some sense I

am always going to be managing change."

The challenge is a big one. The secretariat, says Trimbee, has to ensure it adds value, doesn't take on what it shouldn't, and doesn't threaten the responsibilities of Environment's three services. That means using some precise management skills, and instincts. When you're trying to encourage change, she says, "you can't be too far ahead of where the people you're advising want to go. You have to know when to push hard, when to back off, and when to try Plan B.

"Part of our job is to make sure the department doesn't get too comfortable—if something is routine, we shouldn't be doing it. At the same time, we want to make sure we're changing only if it makes sense to change.

"There's a fine line there that we have to walk. You want to make clients uncomfortable, but not so uncomfortable that they balk.

"I see my leadership being about connecting people, getting the right people in the right places. It's also about staying connected to them. My job is to bring out the best in them, and let them get on with it.

"I'm passionate about the work, I have a good picture of where I want us to go, and I think I'm a good listener. I like to think I bring out the best in people."

It's a leadership style that may have more than a few roots in the role of mom at home.

"At home, moms are constantly coaching and teaching," she says, with more than a hint of a smile. "That's a lot of what I see my role as at work." Being a working mother "also encourages balance, and good behaviours at work. I have to be efficient and delegate in order to have time for my children.

"Having kids also makes it matter more that you feel good about what you do," she says, and laughs. "Waiting at home are these lit-

tle judges who are going to ask me, 'Do you let people pollute the environment?'"

Job stress? "Basically, I don't bottle it up," says Trimbee. "I exercise. And I talk out and share my experiences with a network of friends. The Peer Leadership Group for women in the public service has been invaluable for that. Women in the public service are undergoing a lot of change these days. The group is a good place to share those experiences."

And her advice for anyone taking on the challenge of setting up a new entity?

"Just remember you are not alone. There is an incredible amount of experience in the Alberta public service when it comes to managing change. Alberta's public service has done an excellent job of managing change, and there are so many people out there willing to share what they've learned. You don't have to reinvent the wheel." ■

John Donner *Going Green*

The colour green suits the new Assistant Deputy Minister of the Climate Change Bureau. John Donner has been working to reduce greenhouse gases in Alberta since 1994.

When the Alberta government formally established Climate Change Central in November of 1999 with Minister Mar as Co-Chair, Donner and his climate change staff transferred to Alberta Environment from Resource Development. The move was necessary to better facilitate co-ordination across the government. Donner now works to support the Alberta government's involvement in Climate Change Central.

"I think the most challenging part of climate change is that

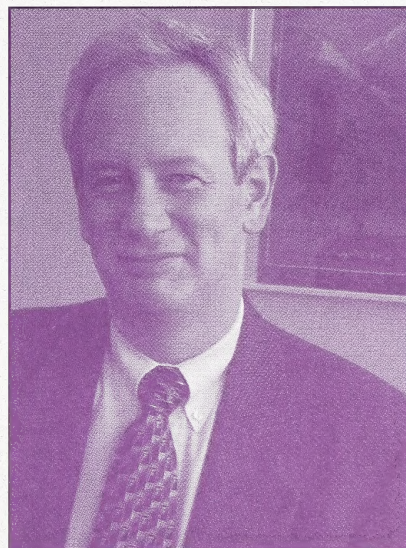
it's such a large issue—in terms of potential impact, the time-frame we have to work with, and the people involved," says Donner. "My role is new because it highlights the need for closer co-ordination within government—horizontal management rather than vertical management."

Working successfully with other provincial government departments, stakeholders, and the federal government is a key factor in Donner's new role.

Within the Alberta government he strives to improve the co-

ordination of policy advice and programming by working in partnership with other departments.

That includes reporting to the Sustainable Development Co-ordinating Council. Made up of deputy ministers from nine other government departments, the Natural Resources Conservation Board, the Alberta Research Council, and the Alberta Science and Research Authority, the council works to



John Donner — Assistant Deputy Minister of the Climate Change Bureau

develop cross-department sustainable resource and environmental management initiatives that focus on the cumulative impacts of industry on the environment.

Continued on page 8

John Donner *continued*

On a national level, Donner is working to develop a climate change response strategy under the direction of the federal energy and environment ministers that will position Alberta—and in part Canada—to manage the risks of climate change.

"The job is rewarding," Donner confirms. "It is challenging to think strategically long term, and to serve both environmental and economic objectives. The scope is broad, the government commitment is clear, and the options are fascinating."

The province of Alberta has been a longtime leader in dealing with the issue of climate change. Working with representatives from industry, business, other governments, and the community, the Alberta government is dealing with an issue

"... success comes from all the departments working together. We have excellent staff in the Bureau and great partners in other departments across government."

that not only affects Albertans, but everyone around the world. The government's voluntary efforts were recognized with national leadership awards in 1997, 1998, and 1999.

When asked about these awards, Donner replies: "That success comes from all the departments working together. We have excellent staff in the Bureau and great partners in other departments across government." He attributes much of the success to "the innovation of Alberta Infrastructure in particular."

Alberta's climate change initiatives are a success both provincially and federally, but Donner completely attributes that to the people he has worked with.

"If I'm successful at what I do, that success can be attributed to successful partnerships. That's what my job is about, working with the private sector and other governments to try and find new ways to do business. This job is different because it relies on relationships rather than in-house delivery. That's what makes it so exciting." ■



Campaign Chair Charlotte Moran with the United Way's Bill Bannister

Award of Distinction

The Alberta public service has been recognized for making the largest employee donation to the 1999 United Way campaign. When all the counting was done, the total raised by provincial employees was an impressive \$581,579. Campaign Chair Charlotte Moran accepted the award of distinction on behalf of the APS from the United Way's Bill Bannister.



United Way
Alberta Capital Region

NOWICKI NOTES

Senior Deputy Julian Nowicki was seen and noted visiting with department executive management committees during the past few weeks. His messages contained some common themes. **on responsibility**—"Every manager plays a vital role in fulfilling the corporate needs of government, by providing policy advice, meeting business plan goals and consistently performing well." **on the public service today**—"The government has a high commitment to the public service, so those of us who are part of it shouldn't rest on our laurels. There's room to take risks. There's room to think outside the box." **on the public service tomorrow**—"There's a need to encourage staff development. Strong succession planning is essential. Rejuvenation and maintaining high standards are very important. And with regard to our future leaders, growing and promoting our own should be part of leadership planning for the future."

UPCOMING

Premier's Award of Excellence Award Ceremony

When: Monday afternoon,
June 19, 2000

Where: Northern Alberta
Jubilee Auditorium

To change your mailing label address, please correct and return it to the payroll area of your department's human resources office for update in the IMAGIS database.